

May 26, 2011

I took a couple months off from my report, but it is time to start keeping them available. Besides, Salmon season is just over a month away.

I know spring is here for sure as even the weather finally feels like spring. The days are reasonably warm, but this will be another late spring for sure. We are finally starting to get the rains, and the winter melt is really starting in the mountains. Snow is still visible from town, and last night there was snow above Pateros at about 3200'. The Okanogan and Methow are full and full of large debris. According to the experts they are not expected to hit peak flow until around the second week of June. Luckily the entire Columbia river system and its tributaries have been having the same type and timing of water. What does that mean for the fish? The biological/science people can only guess based on historical information...and I can only guess at this point also. Well,... really theirs and mine are more of a "Hypothesis" instead of a guess. Here it is...

At this time it really looks like this Salmon run will be pushed back from the norm much like last year. Many of you are very aware of the lower Columbia season opening/closing issues due to low numbers compared to previous historical dates. The fish arrived for sure, but they were just late compared to historical data. As much as we might want these great fish to run on our "Calendar" they run based on what the water is telling them. Take a look at historical charts in the dam counts link in graph format and it fairly easy to see. What does this mean in easy terms? I am sure there will be fish up here for the opener, but the major numbers both in Kings and Sockeye will be about two weeks later than the average. This is just looking at the current weather situation and extending it through the summer. I went to a dirt bike ride this weekend and did not have to go very far before I hit snow still out in the shady areas.

What I would love to see is a steady warm up so as to avoid flooding. The warm up increases so that the Okanogan hits 70 degrees before daily numbers get very high. Then before the start of the large daily numbers the Okanogan locks the door at 72 degrees. This is very possible if we get the warm weather, and it looks like we will have an extra couple of weeks before the big numbers arrive locally. What happens if the Okanogan stays cold when Salmon start to arrive? There will be fish that continue up the Okanogan as the "Thermal Barrier" is not present. Some of the fish also will stay in the Columbia. So, for right now it is just a waiting game to see what will happen.

Palmer Lake

I have made several trips up to Palmer for Kokanee. Palmer was really kicking out some nice silvers early on, but the runoff has filled the lake and the bite has slowed a little. We were getting limits of up to 15 silvers in the 14-18" range with most about 15+". The water is just a few feet from the paved parking lot on the SE end, and the fishing should start to pick back up once it stabilizes. The only thing for me is once it finally settles down at Palmer it will be SALMON SEASON here!!!!

Lake Chelan

I also made a couple trips to Chelan and we caught just over a fish an hour, but were unable to bring up any double digit fish. Chelan was dropped lower then I have seen it in

years, and it is still being held much lower than normal. They have to do this because of the expected run off still to come. I have a couple trips planned for Chelan the next two weeks, and have been told the larger Lakers are starting to bite more. I caught my biggest Lakers last year in June, so maybe it will hold true again this year.

Rufus Woods

They are still catching fish but it really has not turned on with any big rush. Some people are getting 1-2 a day, but the lots of fish by lots of different people has not happened yet. Was told by a friend they caught two last week and the larger one was 17lbs.

Keep your fingers crossed and hope for warmer weather, and with that many positive vibes going out Mother Nature should smile on us. She treated me very well last year, and I have made my sacrifices to her this year also. Yes I am a little superstitious but not any worse than most anglers.

I am booking Salmon trips for this year now. The season runs from July into October, and each month has different aspects of this great fishery. Please call or email me for information on my experiences with the season changes as it progresses.

Ron